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EVALUATION INQUIRY AS A RESEARCH MODEL TO STUDY AN INTERVENTION PROGRAM TO ADDRESS THE 'LESSER NATIONAL IDENTITY' ISSUE AMONG MALAYSIAN YOUTH IN THE GLOBALIZATION ERA

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The rapid advancement of technology and telecommunication tools since the 1980s in Malaysia is among the main factors that contributed towards the emergence of its global society. This phenomena is also among other factors that created the lesser Malaysian identity among its youth. Since the 1990s American culture has been identified as the 'global culture', especially among the youth. They not only have become citizens of the internet world, but are also less inclined towards their own culture and identity. This condition raised concern about the lesser Malaysian identity among Malaysian youth and the need to introduce an intervention program to address this issue in a form of an applied research. This paper intends to share the evaluation inquiry research model that has been developed to seek answer to the challenge statement of this research 'whether the intervention program increased the national identity amongst its participants?'. The findings of this paper is that although the evaluation inquiry design provides five steps to complete the research process- Positioning the inquiry, Planning the inquiry, Collecting the data, Analyzing and synthesizing the data, and Communicating the inquiry findings- only the first three steps are relevant at the phase of designing the research proposal. Besides that, the combination of both qualitative and quantitative research instruments allows a holistic understanding on the impact of the intervention program in empowering the identity of the participants. The employment of questionnaire and semi-structured interviews, as research instruments will efficiently enable the process of data collection to measure the effectiveness of the intended intervention program to empower the Malaysian youth identity.

Keywords: research design, evaluation inquiry, youth identity, globalization, Malaysia

1. INTRODUCTION

Globalization as suggested by Giddens (1991) is 'the intensification of worldwide social relations which link distant localities in such a way that local happenings are shaped by events occurring many miles away and vice versa'. Up to date many western and Malaysian scholars have studied globalization, its impact on societies, and globalization and identity (Robertson, 1992; Ishak Shari, 1993, 1999; Tomlinson, 1999; Urry, 2003; Held & McGrew, 2003; Kessler, C.S., 2006; Ray, 2007; Bourn, 2008; Samsudin A. Rahim, Latiffah Pawanteh, 2010; Abdul Rahman Embong, 2011; Ang S.M., Chiok P.F., Low C.C., 2015). The conclusion that can be derived from these studies are, globalization is the existing relationships and connections that are created among individuals, communities, nations and organizations at global level, as well as interdependence of societies on a world scale, and it's an agent of culture and identity change in the context of Malaysia.

Identity according to Deaux (1993) is abstract, intangible concept, organized in a hierarchical way. Van Gorp, J. (2005) states identity as an individual's self-understanding about his traits and characteristics as member of a certain social category. Then when both previous definitions on globalization and identity are brought together-in the context of this paper- it assist in the understanding of self-identity process in a globalization era, which is-existing relationships and connections that are created by Malaysian youths at a global level affects their self-understanding about self traits and characteristics as a member of the global society.

Debates and concerns in regard to global culture in Malaysia began in the 1990s. Among the main concern of these debates was the influence of American culture and effects of technology advancements in Malaysia (Abdul Rahman Embong, 2004; Yoshihara Kunio, 2004; Mittelman, J. 2004). These concerns became reality in the early 21st century. The percentage of Malaysian youth that had access to the global society increased many folds in the early second decade of the 21st century, compared to the first decade. A survey conducted under the Asia Foundation on "The Youth Factor 2012 Survey of Malaysian Youth Opinion" concluded that only 2% of Malaysian youth had no access to internet as compared to 67% in the year 2007²³. This findings proofs that it is inevitable for Malaysians to reject the rising tide of globalization with the advancement of the mass media, the internet and the news media. Later in March of 2014, Professor Dr Ramlah binti Adam (historian) and Nik Mohamad Nik Mohd Salleh (Malaysia Historical Society) stated that the Malaysian youth are influenced by Western culture and have drifted away from their own identity (Nor Sakinah Mohd Farit 2014). This issue of Malaysian youth with lesser Malaysian identity raised concern and brought about the need to carry out a research as an intervention program. Thus this paper intends to share the research design that had been formulated to evaluate the intervention program to empower national identity among Malaysian youth in the globalization era.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Although many studies have been conducted on globalization in Malaysia since the 1990s, there are not many studies carried out to evaluate intervention programs to empower Malaysian identity in a globalized Malaysia. Up to date most research focused on subjects of youth, identity and effects of globalization in Malaysia in general (Ishak Shari, 1993, 1999; Haryati Abdul Karim, 2010; Samsudin A. Rahim, Latiffah Pawanteh, 2010; See H.P, 2011: Adlina AB. Halim, 2011: Abdul Rahman Embong, 2011: Ang S.M., Chiok P.F., Low C.C., 2015). These studies are examples of research that are mainly fundamental research in its type which explains the globalization era in Malaysia and its affects. Knowledge gap is evident in this area of study. Thus the closest past literature in the context of evaluating a research design and it's tools to study an intervention program would be by Nur Afifah Vanitha Abdullah (2015).

Nur Afifah carried out a study on an applied research design to evaluate an intervention program to promote traditional theatre among young children in Sarawak, Malaysia. This literature shares it's research design and instruments applied to evaluate the efficacy of the intervention program in stimulating interest among it's participants towards the wayang kulit- Malay shadow play. The findings of this research were, the shadow play performance experience was the most effective tool to stimulate the participant's interest towards the traditional wayang kulit. Besides performance experience, the intervention program also used lecture, watching live performance and

²³ Over 2,100 youth across all states and federal territories in Malaysia were engaged in the comprehensive survey (Asia Foundation, pg 3).

video sessions as other stimulation tool to engage participants to shadow play. Nur Afifah's applied research design and its research instruments provides a general understanding and idea on the research design and instruments for the proposed study to evaluate the empowerment of Malaysian youth identity intervention program.

3. RESEARCH METHOD

The findings for this paper arrived from a study that is very fundamental in its type. The limited literature on the subject of research model to evaluate an intervention program was the basis for this approach. Content analysis was the main research instrument where data was sourced before the research design was decided on. The content analysis tool covered readings mainly, on books and journal articles on research design and research tools that focused on previous evaluation studies on intervention programs in the area of culture and identity.

4. FINDINGS

4.1. The Research Design

This research is an applied research type that intends to find solution to the 'less Malaysian' identity issue among the Malaysian youth. The aim and type of this research is in accordance to what Kothari (2004) defines as an applied research, which is "research aimed at certain conclusions (say, a solution) facing a concrete social or business problem is an example of applied research".

Meanwhile as an applied research the intended research's objective is to evaluate the identity empowerment program for the Malaysian youth. Parsons (2001) suggest the term 'evaluative inquiry' because it fits within the broad category of evaluation methods referred to as utilization-focused evaluation. Parsons (2001) further explains that the term "evaluative inquiry" balances attention to the investigation itself with its purpose. That is, the process of conducting the inquiry can be as useful as the ultimate findings. The benefits of evaluative inquiry are in both the process and its informative results. As suggested by Parsons (2001), this research will be conducted in five steps, which are:

- a- Positioning the inquiry
- b- Planning the inquiry
- c- Collecting the data
- d- Analyzing and synthesizing the data
- e- Communicating the inquiry findings

In the first step- positioning the inquiry- the researcher needs to scope the investigation, identify the team members and support the programs development by providing a challenge statement, and action and inquiry map. The scope of the Malaysian youth identity empowerment program are youths from various ethnic groups that come from all 14 states in Malaysia. The age range of the youths in this study should be 18-24 years old and those attending public higher learning institutions in Malaysia²⁴. These samples can be easily accessed in higher learning

²⁴ There are 20 public universities, where five are ranked as research universities while the rest are comprehensive universities. The five universities are University Malaya, National University of Malaysia, University of Science Malaysia, University Technology Malaysia, and University Putra Malaysia

institution settings and are selected on volunteer basis. This study wants to capture the sense of national identity of these samples before and after the identity empowerment program.

The research team members are scholars from various sub-field of the social science and humanities studies, such as performing arts (theatre and music), literature and fine arts. Besides building the research design, the close ended questionnaires and semi structured interview questions, these scholars are responsible for planning the inquiry; conducting the intervention program; data collection and analysis; and disseminating research findings through academic writings and seminars. Since National University Malaysia does not offer music as a program of study, this research will collaborate with music scholars at the National Arts, Culture and Heritage Academy. Lecturers at the music faculty will be engaged to assist in the area of music and theatre. Collaborative research efforts, especially research that are multi-discipline in characteristic are highly recommended among Malaysian scholars by the Malaysian Higher learning Ministry.

The intervention program is the most important aspect in this research. The intervention program basically is designed to assist its participants to do research on local folklores, adapt the local folklore into a creative narrative and later present it in the form of shadow play to an open audience. Performing arts skill such as storytelling, making puppets, creating a narrative from local folklore, making shadow play and music will be taught in a workshop mode. The shadow play presentation as the highlight of the program. This performance is not similar to the Malay shadow play, called the 'wayang kulit'. The intended performance only employs shadow producing techniques from the 'wayang kulit'. Basically, participants will be taught to cast shadow on a large screen creatively using puppets made by themselves, objects around them, as well as their body. The main idea of this performance is to adapt the local oral narratives that participants have gathered from people around them and present it to their audience. By performing these stories, they will have to reenact significant incidence and re-live local hero/s. This will provide an opportunity for the participants to experience the lives, struggles, and emotions of the local heros.

The challenge statement of this research would be whether the intervention program increased the national identity amongst its participants. Answers to this challenge statement depends on the planning and the structure of the intervention program. Besides the intervention program, the timing and the instrument to acquire data is very important in this research to measure the effect of the intended program. This research intends to apply both qualitative and quantitative research instruments to collect data, which are questionnaires and semi-structured interviews.

Questionnaires will be distributed and collected at two point of the intervention program, one at the very beginning of the intervention program and the other after the shadow play public performance. Both questionnaires are identical. The questionnaire at the start point of the program is intended to measure the level of national identification among participants, where else the answers to the same questionnaire after the intervention program would be able to capture if there is any shift in the their response. Besides questions on demography, this questionnaire covers areas of knowledge and interest towards local folklore, culture and arts; understanding and embracement of the 'rukun negara' (national principles), and self-identification to a multi-racial Malaysia.

A semi structured interview will be conducted after the public performance. Participants will be chosen randomly to participate in this interview. The aim of this interview is to collect data on perceptions of participants on their self-identification being a Malaysian before and after the

intervention program. Participant's thoughts and comments on the strength and weakness of the programs structure will also be captured through this interview.

Data collected through questionnaire before and after the intervention program will be tabulated and analyzed using the SPSS software to perform the statistical analysis. This analysis will be able to provide statistical answers to whether the intervention program managed to increase the national identity among the program participants. Besides that the questionnaire will also be able to provide other related and relevant answers to the research question. Gender, participant's ethnic, education background (national or national type school), their hometown location, access to internet and type of internet search as well as frequency, are among the baseline information that can be related to the respondent's knowledge and interest towards local folklore, national heros; culture and arts; understanding and embracement of the 'rukun negara' (national principles), self-identification to a multi-racial Malaysia; their pride as a Malaysian; and their love for the country. These co-relations will be analyzed in both sets of questionnaire, completed by participants at the beginning and the end of the intervention program. Interviews conducted with the participants after the program, on the other hand, will provide in depth answers on their feelings, thoughts and perception on their self -identity. Among important questions posed towards participants during the interview session would be their opinion on and their feeling towards the local culture and arts, local narratives and heros, being part of a multi ethnic society, their identification and pride as Malaysian, as well as the success of the program. The interviews will be recorded and transcribed. Findings of this research will be documented in the form of monographs, journal articles, and chapters in books. Research findings will also be shared in conferences and seminars.

5. CONCLUSION

Evaluation inquiry model provides five steps to evaluate the effectiveness of a solution to address an issue. In the phase of designing a research proposal only the first three steps in this model is relevant. The three steps of this model provide a clear plan to ensure aspects such as scope the investigation, identifying the team members, challenge statement, action and inquiry map, and data collection are carefully selected and considered in the planning of the research design. Besides that, the combination of both qualitative and quantitative research instruments allows a holistic understanding on the impact of the intervention program in empowering the identity of the participants. The employment of questionnaire and semi-structured interviews as research instruments will efficiently enable the process of data collection to measure the effectiveness of the intended intervention program to empower the Malaysian youth identity.

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